



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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NOTICE OF DECISION FOR WESTERN MONTANA FISH AND GAME ASSOCIATION September 11, 2008

A draft Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared by FWP for the proposed purpose of granting funds to the Western Montana Fish and Game Association (WMFGA) for shooting range improvements. FWP proposed to provide \$103,457 as partial funding to repair safety berms, increase berm heights and improve roads; (2) replace the existing north boundary fence with a 6ft chainlink security fence; and (3) construct a 960 square foot building which will contain bathroom facilities and a meeting room.

This draft EA was circulated for public comment between August 7, 2008 and September 9, 2008. During this time period, notices announcing the comment period and the EA were placed on FWP's website, as two legal ads in the **Missoulian**, and as a news release.

FWP received 25 supportive comments from individuals and one from the President of the Hellgate Hunters and Anglers, a *Montana Wildlife Federation* affiliate with membership of over 250 people located mostly in the Missoula area, who stated "This shooting facility is a significant asset to a great number of people in our area, including many of our members. This is a quality shooting facility that serves a variety of groups and individuals needs including current and soon to be hunters, law enforcement personnel, ROTC classes and a significant number of "serious" shooters. ...At a meeting of our Directors on September 2nd, we voted unanimously to support this proposed grant."

The department also received the following two comments:

- The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) commented: "We feel that there is a low likelihood cultural properties will be impacted. We, therefore, feel that a recommendation for a cultural resource inventory is unwarranted at this time. However, should cultural materials be inadvertently discovered during this project we would ask that our office be contacted and the site investigated."

FWP response: the department will pass on the SHPO comments to WMFGA; however, this project uses no federal funds nor does it takes place on state owned or

controlled property; therefore, the Federal 106 Regulations and the State Antiques Act do not apply.

- *“I paid an extra \$5 for a card to open that gate and it has been broken all year long. Can we put a little money toward the gate so people don't feel ripped off like I do? Personally I think that just the money from our membership should be enough to fix the gate (It cost me \$60 for last year which seems pretty steep). Also, during the winter, the drive up the hill is very slippery. If you paved that road and lessened the angle of it, that would be nice so people like me without 4wheel drive can shoot in the winter. Only being able to shoot in the summer seems like a waste of money.”*

FWP response: neither of these subjects are part of this EA; however, in discussion with WMFGA the gate has been repaired and is working. WMFGA has approximately 1,500 members who pay dues of \$50/year individual, plus \$10 per additional family member. This rate appears appropriate based on the size of the facility and services. The road issue has been discussed at past WMFGA Club meetings (these meetings are advertised to the membership and held at the MT Fish, Wildlife and Park office in Missoula) and determined not to be as high of priority as the other projects in the EA. WMFGA uses volunteers and commercial contractors to keep the road plowed in the winter.

Therefore; by notification of this decision the Draft EA is hereby made the Final EA and the Western Montana Fish & Game Association will be awarded this shooting range development grant.

Thomas Baumeister
Education Bureau Chief